

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5235/1460728X.17.3.425>*Legal Ethics*, Volume 17, Part 3

# Reports, Comments & Notes

## Legal Ethics at a Time of Regulatory Change: The Sixth International Legal Ethics Conference, London

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The International Legal Ethics Conference (ILEC) returned to England in 2014, with the Sixth ILEC being held at City University, London from 10–12 July. ILEC is a regular biennial event; earlier conferences in the series having been held in Exeter, England (2004);<sup>1</sup> Auckland, New Zealand (2006);<sup>2</sup> the Gold Coast, Australia (2008);<sup>3</sup> Stanford University, USA (2010);<sup>4</sup> and Banff, Canada (2012).<sup>5</sup> ILEC has always had a close association with this journal, and since Stanford it has been organised under the auspices of the International Association of Legal Ethics.

As the London Conference showed, ILEC has become the preeminent international gathering for legal ethics scholarship. More than 230 contributors from universities, regulatory authorities and the practising legal profession gave, altogether, 140 presentations and collaborated in 21 panels over 69 different sessions. The themes were culture and technology; ethics and society; empirical approaches to legal ethics; philosophy and legal ethics; regulation of the profession; and ethics and legal education. Comparing the contributions given with the scholarship presented in earlier ILECs, it is evident that there is growing interest in the effect of technology on legal practice and lawyers' ethics, and in

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1 See Sue Nelson, 'Discussion Forum: Reflections from the International Conference on Legal Ethics from Exeter' (2004) 7 *Legal Ethics* 159.

2 Linda Haller, 'Professional Ethics and Personal Integrity: Report from the International Conference on Legal Ethics, Auckland, New Zealand' (2006) 9 *Legal Ethics* 13.

3 Francesca Bartlett and Reid Mortensen, 'Integrity in Legal Practice: A Report from the Third International Legal Ethics Conference, Gold Coast, Australia' (2009) 12 *Legal Ethics* 100.

4 Vivien Holmes and Kath Hall, 'Legal Profession in Times of Turbulence: The International Legal Ethics Conference IV' (2010) 13 *Legal Ethics* 209.

5 Alice Woolley and Richard Devlin, 'Merging Worlds, Emerging Discourses: International Legal Ethics Conference V' (2012) 15 *Legal Ethics* 379.

judicial ethics. Law and religion was also an area that garnered interest. Legal philosophy was, as always, the catalyst for a number of interesting and well-attended sessions.

ILEC VI also witnessed a significant shift towards an interest in legal ethics outside the common law world. Delegates came from 35 countries, with sizeable numbers coming from eastern Europe (Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia) and the Middle East (Iran, Israel, Kuwait, Oman, Turkey). It demonstrated that there is now rich comparative work between common law, European and Asian scholarship being undertaken in legal ethics.

Delegates to ILEC VI were welcomed to the Conference Dinner by the Benchers of the Inner Temple. Any schooled in the common law tradition could not be but overwhelmed to be greeted by the portrait of Sir Edward Coke in the Bencher's Entrance to the Inn, and then to be hosted for a dinner in the Great Hall. Lord Justice Laws, one of the Inner Temple's Benchers, gave a pithy, hortatory after dinner speech. *Legal Ethics* has been given permission to publish His Lordship's speech in this issue.<sup>6</sup> An additional highlight for many was provided by the fascinating walking tour of the cradle of the legal profession, the Inns of Court.

ILEC VI also marked the handover of the Presidency of the International Association of Legal Ethics. Professor Deborah Rhode has been instrumental in establishing the Association, and promoting international collaboration in legal ethics and the ILEC series through the Association. It is indebted to her for carrying the role of Inaugural President since 2010, and she received profuse thanks for this at the Conference. The Presidency now passes to Professor Kim Economides, currently Dean of Law at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia. Professor Economides is one of the founders of this journal and of the ILEC series, having hosted the first conference in Exeter. Again, an important pioneer of the whole field of legal ethics scholarship has taken on the work of promoting the discipline through the International Association.

Although ILEC VI closed on Saturday 12 July, the Benchers of the Inner Temple invited delegates to Choral Matins in the Temple Church on the following Sunday. Professor Rhode was asked to give the sermon, and spoke about our personal responsibility for maintaining the ethics of our profession, and the value of comparative and cross-cultural understanding in this endeavour. Given the internationalist flavour of ILEC VI, it was a fitting conclusion to the Conference. Professor Rhode's sermon is also published in this issue of *Legal Ethics*.<sup>7</sup>

Thanks and credit for the success of this Conference must be given to Professors Andy Boon and Nigel Duncan of City University. Their patience, unfailing politeness and superb organisational skills are appreciated and were exemplary. The Benchers of the Inner Temple were also unfailingly generous in their hospitality and interest in the Conference.

In addition to the innovative and thoughtful scholarship that was evident in the many parallel sessions at ILEC VI, many fruitful connections were made. It is likely that these will generate further interesting contributions to future ILEC conferences, notably perhaps ILEC VII for which planning is already underway. This will be held in 2016 in New York and hosted by the Stein Center for Law and Ethics based at Fordham University, New York.

<sup>6</sup> Sir John Laws, 'Sydney's Sketches, Sydney's Fingers—After Dinner at The Inner Temple', this issue.

<sup>7</sup> Deborah L Rhode, 'Watching the Muffins—The Temple Church Sermon', this issue.